

sue them for the telephone bill and who encourage talent in order to devour it."

And always there is that gift for annihilating satirical parody (his destruction of the prose style of Hugh Kenner's book on Eliot is convincing and final) and that other, related, gift for pinning down the aesthetic qualities of some writer in a swift phrase that goes straight to the bull's-eye and comes back to our minds whenever we read that writer henceforth:

"The persistent quality of Huysman's work is . . . a taste of generous vinegar."

With this equipment, Mr. Connolly happily enters once more the pastures he has found most green. Virtually all these essays deal with topics he has discussed many times. Europe, travel, eating in restaurants, London life, animals; French literature, particularly of

that period when the French were inventing modern literature and setting the standards for a hundred years of work by the writers of every other nation; the Latin classics; the English 18th Century, especially as expressed in its biographies, memoirs and lighter literature; and — with perhaps the keenest appetite of all — those English, American and Irish writers who represented the modern art of letters when he was a young man and whose work therefore carries the freshness of his own youth. The best piece in the book, a sixteen-page essay on "The Breakthrough in Modern Verse," contains excellent criticism of Pound and Eliot in the crucial early years of their creativity. More densely written than most of the other essays, it is dominated by an evident wish to set the record straight, to provide both historical fact and aesthetic appreciation: it shows Mr. Connolly at his best, and the tragedy is that his best is so rarely on show.

## Who Will Run Your Nervous System?

by Alan Watts

LSD-25 is a chemical which, even in minute doses, brings about marked changes in consciousness. That is to say, it alters the way in which our senses screen their information, and the way in which our thoughts and feelings interpret it. It is thus a "mind-opener" which may be used in varying ways, much as a telescope may be used

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*The Beyond Within: The LSD Story*  
by Sidney Cohen, MD  
Foreword by Gardner Murphy  
(Atheneum; \$5)

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to look at the stars, to identify distant ships, to sight artillery, or to watch the girl in the house across the street. Perhaps the most startling use of this chemical (and of others related to it) is that it can be an avenue to mystical experience — to that particular transformation of consciousness in which the individual knows himself to be one with the entire universe, with Being itself, with God, or with whatever the ulti-

mate reality may be called. Thousands of people have heard of this experience and want it beyond anything else. In times past they have been willing to undergo the most arduous disciplines of mind and senses to attain it. It is the life-goal of every intelligent Hindu and Buddhist. But there has always been a conflict between those who play fair by getting it the hard way, and those who supposedly cheat by using "drugs" which afford a back-entrance short-cut into the Holy of Holies.

This very ancient problem now arises in a new guise. For today the official and powerful guardians of salvation (*i.e.*, sanity) are not priests but psychiatrists — since "insanity" has become the new name for sin or heresy, together with such milder forms of the brand as "neurotic," "disturbed," "deviant," and "maladjusted." Any back-entrance to the psychiatric *summum bonum* (integration, peak-experience, total functioning, etc.) is therefore as repugnant to official psychiatry as it

was to any orthodox priesthood in the past. Perhaps psychiatrists and priests, because of their long training, know best. Perhaps these "short cuts" are pernicious or diabolical counterfeits of the Beatific Vision. Perhaps, too, the priests and psychiatrists are the masters of obsolete disciplines, vestedly opposed to any salvation that does not involve either a religious commitment or at least five years of therapy at fifty dollars a week.

Whatever the right answers to these questions, the discussion of and pursuit of research with psychedelic (*i.e.*, mind-opening) chemicals is virtually taboo in "sound" psychiatric circles. Furthermore, the regulations of the Federal Drug Administration in respect to new and experimental drugs confine work with psychedelics on human beings to hospital and clinical environments so uncongenial to most people that experimentation is almost bound to show that LSD gives nothing but hallucinations and horrors. For the attitude of the investigator and the setting or context of the experiment make vast differences in the state of consciousness induced by chemicals of this kind. Although the major psychedelics — LSD, mescaline, psilocybin, marijuana, or hashish — are not technically narcotic or physically addictive drugs (like heroin and alcohol), they are therefore all the more suspect in a culture which holds that there is no pleasure without punishment. Serious investigation of their use stands where Freud and hypnosis stood in 1900. As always, the taboo has generated an underground, and considerable amounts of bathtub LSD are now in circulation among artists and intellectuals in this country.

But as "there are priests and priests," there are psychiatrists and psychiatrists. Sidney Cohen has rather more than all the qualifications for an officially acceptable investigator. Trained at Bonn and Columbia, he has been for some years chief of psychosomatic medicine at the VA Hospital in Los Angeles. He and his colleague, Keith Dittman, have probably done more careful and properly controlled experimentation with LSD than anyone else in the world, though there are some close seconds. Thus if anyone can speak with

authority about LSD, it is Cohen. He has also the gift, in the medical world, of being able to write excellent, readable and sometimes beautiful English.

From this background comes a sober, fair, cautious, and constructive book which should be studied by everyone interested in psychedelics, for the cooling down of tempers and opposed fanaticisms. He feels that clear-headed research with LSD contains immense possibilities for our understanding of neurology, of the creative process, and even of the physical world as a whole, and may therefore, under proper controls, be a most valuable tool for artists and philosophers, scientists and theologians. He is rather less enthusiastic as to its value in psychotherapy, his view being in sum that it is a most useful aid to the highly competent and emotionally stable therapist, but downright dangerous in the hands of those who do therapy to boost their own otherwise quaking and shuddering egos. He quotes a comprehensive sampling of reports on the LSD experience, in a spectrum varying from the Beatific Vision to the horrors of hell. He surveys medical statistics based on 25,000 experiments with some 5,000 subjects, showing that prolonged "psychotic" effects occurred only in one out of 550 patients given LSD for therapy; that attempted suicides were one in 850, and actual suicide one in 2,500, though there was no sure way of establishing a connection between the suicide and the drug. On the other hand, he shows that dangerous consequences have been much more frequent among people taking psychedelics in immoderate quantities and under incompetent supervision. . . . In short, like so many good things — fire, electricity, steel, aspirin, airplanes, and life itself — LSD is not safe in the hands of fools.

Yet, when it comes to LSD and other methods of controlling or changing consciousness, who is wise? Few people are yet aware that one of the trickiest issues of the future — along with population control, atomic power, and the rest — is the problem of *neuropolitics*. By chemical, electrical, and other methods it will soon be possible to control the nervous system more effectively than ever, and this will put us in sight

of being able to mold human character and emotion. And what types of character, and what emotions ought to be cultivated? What people will be cultivated, and who will be allowed to remain uncultivated? Dr. Rene Dubose has pointed out that even when we can produce personality-type on demand, we shall never be able to predict what personality-types will be needed to meet changing conditions of life.

Understandably, Dr. Cohen is firmly of the opinion that the use of LSD should be supervised by psychiatrists, for, as things now stand, this is probably the only acceptable control — if psychedelics are to be permitted at all. But, looking into the whole future of neuropolitics, what authority is vested in psychiatry or psychiatric training to decide upon such a biological, moral, sociological, and even metaphysical problem as the future transformation of personality? Would any other profession do better? Lawyers? Social psychologists? Anthropologists? Ministers of religion? We know all too well what the last-named did in the days when heresy was felt to be the ultimate peril. That is one reason why freedom of worship is a basic principle of our constitution.

We will probably have to recognize that the transformation of consciousness and personality, whether by Yoga or LSD, is basically a religious problem, entitled to the same constitutional

protection as freedom of worship. Our difficulty in accepting this is the inability to see that LSD enthusiasts stand today where Quakers and Presbyterians stood in the 17th Century, when they were regarded as perverts and lunatics and public menaces. I am sure that there were those who become psychotic and even suicidal from having flouted Authority so flagrantly as to become a Quaker.

The gamble is that the large variety of personality-types that individuals will choose, when left to themselves, is more viable, more adjustable to the unknown future, than the cultivation of one or more "ideal" types under the direction of psychiatrists or any other breed of expert. Basic to democracy is the principle that the expert must be on tap, not on top.

In the end, we shall doubtless have to regulate the psychedelics as we regulate such other dangers as alcohol, automobiles, and firearms — with liberal licensing and strict rules of use. Too many people have become interested in these chemicals to keep them suppressed much longer, and by now we should have learned that prohibition simply passes their control to criminals and incompetent manufacturers, and their use is forced into clandestine circumstances where the psychiatrist and the minister cannot even be asked to advise.

## The Young Man of the Sonnets

by Paul Murray Kendall

Critics explore the imagery, versification, ambiguity, Petrarchan elements of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in efforts to understand a love-poem that — whether because of guarded allusions or luxuri-

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Mr. W. H.  
by Leslie Hotson  
(Knopf; \$6.95)

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ant obliquities — is often elusive, not infrequently enigmatic, and sometimes unintelligible. Readers of poetry are usually content to single out for their enjoyment such poignantly lovely favorites as "When to the sessions,"

"Shall I compare thee," "Two loves I have."

But for numerous scholars, these last 175 years, the *Sonnets* have meant something quite different: a hieroglyphic record of Shakespeare's personal life demanding to be deciphered. In this arena of controversy the poetry has been lost in the puzzle; and there has been waged a battle of autobiographical autopsies that prompted E. K. Chambers to declare a generation ago, "More folly has been written about the sonnets than about any other Shakespearean topic."

It is not surprising that, on this 400th